

Family Farm Care

A NEWSLETTER
SAVING YOU
TIME & £100'S

LINKING FARMERS TO CARE & HEALTH MANAGERS IN THE SOUTH

Spring
09

The best new farm diversification enterprise for 20 years

Welcome to this first issue of our newsletter devoted exclusively to Care Farming, which we think is the latest and most exciting **commercial farm diversification enterprise** for a generation or more ... it could be just right to increase income and job satisfaction for you.

Firstly, to clarify the term Care Farming, it is not about turning your farm into a rural care home and can probably best be explained - albeit a mouthful - as 'using commercial farms, woodlands and market gardens as a base for improving the mental and physical health, development and wellbeing of, usually non-residential, participants through involvement in normal farming and sometimes non-farming activities'.

The participants coming onto your farm could be any small group from any part of a cross section of the population from young children to the elderly – the principal groups are tabulated below. Such visitors could be with you as little as just one day a week and/or use a small part of the farm only.

Although the commercial aspects of the concept are new and still in an embryonic stage in the UK, the potential of this 'win win win' enterprise is, we think, outstanding and all three principal parties involved gain: the participants, those that support them and the farmer. We expect therefore a Care Farming enterprise to become a common occurrence on many multi functional family farms over the next 10 years and probably equally important, 'an accelerator' of good PR for farming generally.

We see this new trend as a logical development from the current general access by the public into the countryside to a more pro-active integration providing increased health and wellbeing benefits as a result.

You only have to look across the water to our neighbour Holland to see the remarkable value of Care Farming to their farmers – 10,000's of participants, including regular GP referrals, use farms for health and general wellbeing purposes where Care Farming is their fastest growing farm diversification enterprise.

All proposed Care Farming sites on farms or elsewhere in the countryside should provide a healthy environment and a stable, secure setting with a variety of meaningful activities available from which to choose.

LOOK INSIDE...

Could your farm include ...

Higher Level Scheme ... more ££ available

Can your people benefit more ...

Farm Sites available...



If you are farming, involved in horticulture or occupy other possible land sites, including woodland, and are interested in knowing more about Care Farming, please contact us.

People visiting farms

People with learning disabilities
People with mental illness
Trauma sufferers
Unmotivated/excluded school children
Youth offenders
People with drug/alcohol dependency
Elderly people
Long term State benefit recipients

Goals achievable

Feeling secure
Useful daytime occupation
Work training (inc with animals)
Social inclusion
Safe leisure time
Education (inc the value of food)
Specific therapeutic aims
Rehabilitation

Farmer benefits

Personal satisfaction
Daily payment of £20 - £100/visitor
Useful assistance
Increased own grown produce sales through positive publicity
Employment of family as trainers, supervisors or carers
Re-connection of rural and urban areas

'As soon as you take away stress, by contact with nature, the body calms down – not just the mind, but also the arteries and the heart.'

Source: Dr William Bird, GP and Strategic Health Adviser, Natural England

'88% of participants visiting farms experienced improvements in their overall mood.'

Source: Hine, Peacock & Pretty, University of Essex 2008

'Mental health will be the new back pain in the future.'

Source: HR Dept, Deloittes, Accountancy 12/08

'As our environment deteriorates, so does our psychological, social and emotional wellbeing. It's an argument that might seem a bit, well, Californian, but appears to be confirmed by a number of studies that have reversed the process and shown that a host of problems can be effectively treated by exposure to nature. The evidence indicates that nature can help us recover from pre-existing stresses or problems, have an 'immunising' effect by protecting us from future stresses, and help us to concentrate and think more clearly.'

Source: The Independent; Eco-psychology, The Face of Nature 08/05

'If your life has revolved around getting drugs you lose the sense of a normal day and there is nobody around who can model a work ethic.'

A farmer can help some of the young people connect back to a normal routine, offer them an environment away from where most of the problems are, and show them they can feel good at the end of a working day.'

Care Farming moves them away from their anti-social environment to a more open one where they can take on responsibility and ownership, which gives them a sense of self worth.'

Source: Dr Adrian West, Clinical Psychologist: Farmers Guardian 5/09

Attention: Service User Managers

Care Farming - Making 'bucketfuls' of difference to your activities

Anyone who supports one or more people is on the lookout, on an almost daily basis, for different activities available in the area to improve their people's health, wellbeing and development. Care Farming is on the cusp of being generally recognised as one of the most desirable activities with rapidly growing options and with efficacy strengthening daily.

Introductions first ...

- All farms are not the same – it is still a surprise to us that outwardly quite similar farms can hold widely different levels of benefit – some you may not have even thought of.
- The different needs of service users are wide – no one farm or other countryside site is likely to meet the needs of all the different groups. Where rehabilitation is involved, remember that a standard commercial farm would usually only be suitable in the final stages of support – therefore picking the right time, as well as the right farm, is important.
- The level of farmer/landowner involvement and how valuable it is, again can be surprisingly diverse; this ranges from landlord only up to a full 'hands on' role.
- Farmers should be approached with an outline proposal that has the elements of clarity and assurance pitched succinctly in a user friendly format.

Taking the first step ...

- Minimise the risk of premature abandonment of the project and save your organisation valuable funds by ensuring your internal decision takers are accurately briefed – Care Farming covers a wide variety of possibilities and can include non-farming activities, e.g. art or music therapy, all available on-farm.
- Highlight the full advantages of Care Farming by 'benefit stacking' your project – in most cases you will find a number of different benefits that can be listed to positively differentiate it from other options.
- Record at the outset in writing the requirements of your Care Farming site and exclude any impractical aspects from your "wish list" – objective assistance from a professional who knows farming and Care Farming can save time and money here.
- Set out a realistic timetable and budget for the project.
- Remember – it's the successful implementation, not the idea itself, that 'delivers the goods'. Do you need assistance?
- When visiting possible sites, keep an open mind on possibilities, e.g. inclusion of a neighbouring site as well may make the proposition more beneficial.
- Lastly, keep focussed on your 'requirements' list as farms are attractive sites, which can be distracting!

Parting shot: Act now for the best choice.

A FREE introductory meeting at your premises is available by contacting Stephen Sellers at New Farm Horizons t: 01420 538793 e: stephen@newfarmhorizons.co.uk



A selection of sites in the countryside awaiting proposals from service user managers

Area	Outline	Suggested service user group
Petersfield	Converted barn and veg growing land	Drug/alcohol dependency
Southampton	3 parcels of mixed woodland, one coastal	Youth
Basingstoke/Farnham	Mixed livestock and arable organic farm, nature trails	Various
Leatherhead	Mixed livestock and arable farm with woodland and building maintenance	Various
Petersfield	4 parcels of pasture land in blocks of around 5 acres with unconverted buildings	Various



Attention: Farmers

Could your farm include a Care Farming enterprise?

We believe Care Farming is tailor made for the next 10 years or more of business life in UK agriculture, combining as it does business and good ethics equally.

If on reading this newsletter you might be interested in a trial enterprise, the first step is to list what particular aspects of your farm and possibly family are likely to offer the most benefits. It is quite surprising how outwardly quite similar holdings can vary significantly in terms of their potential to provide benefits for Care Farming.

The list should be prepared carefully and ideally after research or with someone who has wide Care Farming knowledge; it is easy for the owner/occupier to overlook one or more benefits. A reliable and complete template can then be matched up to the diverse needs of the various groups of participants with help from their supervisors ('service user managers').

The main pre-requisites of any farm are that it must provide a secure environment with sufficient variety of meaningful activities (for choice) and be socially inclusive with others, in particular the farming family. However, additional factors can be influential in finding the right group and reaching agreement on a commercial package that produces worthwhile income. Typical examples of additional useful farm characteristics include:

- Converted building for meal breaks or availability of one to convert
- A Higher Level Scheme regarding environmental management
- Availability of one or more skilled, committed and enthusiastic personnel
- Farm produce sales/a farm shop or café
- Link up possible with neighbours with complementary beneficial factors

It is important also to note that farmers fully committed elsewhere can still be involved acting as landlords and rent out an underutilised corner of their farm if suitable. In such cases, the managers supporting the participants would provide 100% of the supervision. The level of the farming family involvement can in fact extend to any part of the full spectrum from 'landlord only' up to '100% involvement', dependent on what suits all parties involved.

Parting shot: *It's not one size fits all but much more individually based.*

Further FREE information available from Stephen Sellers at New Farm Horizons
e: stephen@newfarmhorizons.co.uk t: 01420 538793

'There needs to be greater recognition that this is not charity or voluntary work but a socially responsible business response to widespread needs that, when unmet, result in substantial costs to society. We aim to ensure that farmers receive both the respect and the financial compensation appropriate for this demanding and valuable work.'

Source: Debbie Wilcox, Network Co-ordinator, National Care Farming Initiative, Farmers Weekly 09/07

'The atmosphere on the Care Farms is pleasant and convivial. The farms offer space (both literally and figuratively) and a possibility to do enjoyable work. It is the combination of factors that make farms different from other opportunities for work'

Source: Elings & Hassink 2007 Report on Dutch Care Farms

'In England and Wales, more children are imprisoned than in any other Western European country. In the UK we lock up 23 children per 100,000 of the population compared to 6 in France, 2 in Spain and 0.2 in Finland.'

Source: The Guardian 4/09

'The main point is not to achieve something, much more it is about to deliver a contribution to the well-being and the further development of those people.'

Source: Dutch National Support Centre for Agriculture & Care Handbook (encl. 6) 2008

'A major survey of Reader's Digest subscribers has revealed that 8 out of 10 UK consumers trusted farmers "a great deal" or "quite a lot" – an approval rating above priests, police and judges and not far behind doctors.'

Source: National Farmers Union bulletin 4/09

'According to a recent European survey (Oostindie et al 2002), more than 12% of farmers in the European Union are interested in performing care activities on their farm; less than 1% of farmers are currently performing care activities.'

Source: Hassink and Van Dijk 2006

Higher Level Scheme - good for the environment and now good for Care Farming

Many farms are familiar with the payments available from the Entry Level Scheme ('ELS') but the Higher Level Scheme ('HLS'), both administered by Natural England, has until recently been a 'rare bird'.

However, Natural England currently has the funds available to promote the HLS much more widely and they confirmed at a recent meeting attended by New Farm Horizons that they see visitors in a Care Farming enterprise as an eligible 'bolt-on' to the educational access visits package of the HLS, where farmers are paid £100/group visit.

Care Farming can quite readily be seen as a logical extension of access to the countryside for education and benefit; nonetheless we think it is to Natural England's credit that they are the first, to our knowledge, national organisation (excluding of course the National Care Farming Initiative) to promote and support the concept to the farming community and the General Public at large; in so doing they also raise the PR image of all farmers whether involved with Care Farming or not.

Further information on the flexibility of the HLS for Care Farming purposes is available from Stephen Sellers at New Farm Horizons.
t: 01420 538793 e: stephen@newfarmhorizons.co.uk

NEW FARM HORIZONS

(est 2008)



Stephen Sellers Dip. AMBA

Having sold the accountancy practice last year, I am now working exclusively on finding sites for Care Farming enterprises in the South.

I set up New Farm Horizons as an independent consultancy because I could see a gap for a 'matching service' between the farmer and those supporting the Care Farming participants, who are looking for 'optimum benefit' sites in the countryside.

The service is focussed around finding the best for the participants visiting the farm. Such visits will also support the continuing viability of the smaller family farm as it can introduce significant increases in income and job satisfaction to the owner/occupier.

Over the last 6 months the response from farmers, service user managers and others already involved in this area has been very encouraging.

The next issue of this 'Family Farm Care' newsletter will be available in November – let us know if you would like to be on our regular mailing list.

The next step – to learn more about Care Farming and how it can boost your farm income, contact:

Stephen Sellers 01420 538793
stephen@newfarmhorizons.co.uk
www.newfarmhorizons.co.uk

Incoming Calls

Q: I am a GP and am interested in alternatives to medication, such as these Care Farm visits. The trouble is I don't know where they are and what activities are available.

A: Yes, I quite understand you need something convenient in the surgery listing the different options available in your area. We plan to trial something in a local surgery and will let you know the results.

Q: I went to a Care Farming seminar but I don't think I'll have enough time to get involved due to my other general farming work.

A: No worries. A full-time Care Farm is not for most farmers, but many more can rent some land out to a service user manager to run it or just have say 3 service users visiting for one day a week.

Q: We are part of the NHS and are looking for interested farmers to host regular visits for service users with mental health problems. The trouble is that there is only polite interest from farmers and no commitment.

A: We can provide a 'matching' service. It is important that farmers are approached by someone familiar with their world; this minimises the time and cost of finding a site and provides the best chance of an agreement that can be implemented and will last.

Hampshire Initiative

Hampshire County Council will soon issue a report on the various activities in the county involved with nature, health and wellbeing. New Farm Horizons attended their workshop to provide information on Care Farming.

Tips for people with potential

Keeping your Tax Credit money in your pocket - did you know that HM Revenue & Customs should waive recovery of overpayments of Tax Credits where the claimant suffers from a mental health problem and where waiver is necessary to prevent 'any detrimental effect or unreasonable distress'? If waiver of the repayment is resisted, refer HMRC to their obligations agreed with HMRC under the Disabilities Discrimination Act.

Holiday accommodation - look up the Care website (www.careinthecountryside.net) for a national network of rural and farm based bed & breakfast and self-catering providers offering specialist holiday accommodation for disabled people, older people, carers and their families.

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